

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the foregoing, the title and claims 1, 3, 5, 13, 20, 27-32 have been amended. Claims 16-19, 26 and 34 have been cancelled. Claims 35-40 have been withdrawn from consideration without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1-34 are pending and under consideration.

OBJECTION TO THE TITLE

The title was objected to as not descriptive. Appropriate correction has been made to the title.

Withdrawal of the foregoing objection is requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 USC 112

Claims 1-17 and 19-34 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Appropriate correction has been made to claims 1, 20 and 26 as suggested in the Office Action. Claims 16, 17 and 19 have been cancelled.

Withdrawal of the foregoing rejection is requested.

CLAIM REJECTION – 35 USC 102

Claim 18 was rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Sumida et al. (US 5,947,135). Claim 18 was further rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Bleckmann (US 4,326,552).

Claim 18 has been cancelled.

CLAIM REJECTION – 35 USC 102

Claims 1, 2, 5-11, 15, 17-19 and 33 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Sakata (US 5,355,900) (hereinafter "Sakata").

Claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 12 and is therefore believed to be allowable. Claims 2, 8-11, 15 and 33 are dependent on claim 1 and are therefore believed to be allowable for the foregoing reason. Claim 5 has been rewritten in independent form to include the allowable subject matter of claim 34 and the limitations of its base claim and is therefore believed to be allowable along with its dependent claims 6 and 7. Claims 17-19 have been cancelled.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that claims 3, 4, 12-14, 20-32 and 34 have been found to contain allowable subject matter. Claims 3, 13 and 27-32 have been rewritten in independent form and are now believed to be allowable. The allowable subject matter of claim 34 has been incorporated into claim 5, and claim 5 has been further amended to include the limitations of base claim 1. The allowable subject matter of claim 12 has been incorporated into claim 1. Claim 20 has been amended to overcome the 35 USC 112 rejection and is now believed to be in a condition for allowance, along with claims 21-25, which depend from claim 20.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: Dec 28, 2005

By: Gregory W. Harper
Gregory W. Harper
Registration No. 55,248

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501